

Saskatchewan River Sturgeon Management Board

October 23, 2014 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Ramada Hotel – Prince Albert SK

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Raymond Lathlin, Opaskwayak Cree Nation
Diane Ballantyne, Opaskwayak Cree Nation Resource Council
Ron Campbell, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship
Shelley Matkowski, Manitoba Hydro
Gary Carriere, Cumberland House Fishermen's Co-Op
Ron Hlasny, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
Marcy Bast, SaskPower

Guests:

Don MacDonell, North/South Consulting Ltd.

1. Opening prayer - Ray
2. Introductions
3. Review agenda

Added discussion Manitoba Hydro sturgeon research meetings in January. Ron C. will be attending to present his index netting information to the group. Also added discussion of everyone's 2014 activities.

4. Report of activities in 2014

Manitoba index fishing program was conducted between August 19 and September 3. 272 LKST were caught, of those 21 were recaptures and there was 1 mortality. The same crew was used as in the past, to cover the 200 km study area.

Diane indicated that Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) did not conduct any new work during 2014.

Manitoba Hydro has a 5 year MOU (2014-2019) with the province to provide up to \$50,000 annually to conduct research. Under this MOU Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Conservation and Water

Stewardship Department (MCWS) jointly agree on annual sturgeon research projects to be conducted by MCWS, university researchers or consultants.

In Saskatchewan, no index fishing was conducted on the river, however Cumberland House fishers assisted with the fish salvage at EBCampbell following spilling in 2014, which included tagging and release of 18 LKST from the stilling basin, of which 6 were recaptures. Additional research on spawning below the Nipawin and EBCampbell facilities showed suitable habitat and successfully fertilized LKST eggs in these locations.

Gary noted community concerns with the delta, and emphasized the need for research on LKST habitat near Cumberland House.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment noted that while they plan to contribute to index fishing every 3 years, they may have money available in between those periods to contribute to other research priorities of the board.

5. Review of draft Ten-Year Management Plan

Don led the group through the revisions that had been made to the draft plan since the last meeting. There were no significant concerns with the document, but everyone was given until November 7 to provide anything further before the plan is finalized.

Action: Marcy will compile any comments and provide to Don after November 7 deadline.

6. Population status – data review results

Index fishing data from both SK and MB had been reviewed and interpreted independently by North/South Consultants. In the past, information gathered had suggested a stable population that may have been slightly increasing. Unfortunately, with respect to adults anyway, the population between EBCampbell and Grand Rapids appears to be barely stable, and slightly decreasing. Despite this, fishers from both Saskatchewan and Manitoba continue to report more frequent capture of juvenile-size sturgeon. The focus of future work will look at identifying limiting factors to this population that may be hindering recovery.

Action: Once finalized, the data review will be provided to board members.

7. Priority activities moving forward

Discussion centred around limiting factors of the population. Priority areas included confirmation of spawning locations, overwintering habitat, juvenile populations and juvenile habitat.

Action: Marcy and Shelley will develop a research plan for 2015, and provide to the board for comment over the winter.

8. Co-chairs

There was discussion regarding the positions of co-chair for the board. Marcy had chaired alone for the past term, and both Shelley (MB) and Ron H. (SK) offered to begin a term starting at the spring meeting in 2015.

Action: Shelley and Ron H. will start as co-chairs of the board at the spring meeting in 2015.

9. Next meeting

The spring meeting will be held in Manitoba on February 26, 2015, and there is some concern regarding out-of-province approvals for the SK government representative, Ron H. Because of this, the meeting will be held in either the Pas or Creighton/Flin Flon.

Action: Ron H. will confirm out-of-province for meeting attendance and let the board members know. This will determine the location for February 26.

10. Closing Prayer - Gary

Summary of Action Items:

- Marcy will compile any comments and provide to Don after November 7 deadline.
- Once finalized, the data review will be provided to board members.
- Marcy and Shelley will develop a research plan for 2015, and provide to the board for comment over the winter.
- Shelley and Ron H. will start as co-chairs of the board at the spring meeting in 2015.
- Ron H. will confirm out-of-province for meeting attendance and let the board members know. This will determine the location for February 26.